

Message Text

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67

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-15

AID-20 PC-04 CU-04 NIC-01 RSR-01 /119 W

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R 192215Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4805

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 2675

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS HO

SUBJ: TEGUCIGALPA STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE AGAINST GOH

1. SUMMARY: SERIES OF SECONDARY STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN TEGUCIGALPA HAVE GOH CONCERNED, AND POLICE APPARENTLY PREPARED TO STEP IN TO CONTROL ANY VIOLENCE SHOULD THIS DEVELOP. USG PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES NOT INVOLVED SO FAR. END SUMMARY.

2. BEGINNING LAST WEEK AND STILL CONTINUING, LOCAL SECONDARY STUDENTS ARE CARRYING OUT DAILY STREET DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST GOH. CAMPAIGN IS BEING DIRECTED BY COMMUNIST-LED FESE (FEDERATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENTS), AND IS MAINLY AIMED AT FORCING MINISTER OF EDUCATION TO DESIST FROM IMPLEMENTING PLAN TO RESTRUCTURE NORMAL SCHOOL SYSTEM. IMMEDIATE FOCUS IS TO PREVENT PLANNED PHASE-OUT OF NORMAL SCHOOLS IN TEGUCIGALPA.

3. PRO-MOSCOW LEFTIST GROUPS IN UNIVERSITY ARE MASTER-MINDING PROJECT, AND MINED NAPOLEON ALCERRO TELLS US THAT
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ZUNIGA IS ALSO CONTRIBUTING FUNDS TO CAMPAIGN. STUDENTS

HAVE HAD DIFFICULTY TO DATE IN GETTING BROAD SUPPORT, SINCE BOTH TRADE UNIONS AND PEASANT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE FAILED TO RESPOND, ALTHOUGH TWO TEACHERS ORGANIZATIONS, COLPROSUMAH AND COPEMH, HAVE ENDORSED STRIKE GOALS. SO FAR STRIKERS HAVE ALSO BEEN UNABLE TO GET MUCH ASSISTANCE FROM PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS.

4. EVEN SO, STRIKERS HAVE FIELDDED UP TO 1000 STUDENTS DAILY BEGINNING JULY 12. ON JULY 16 THEY SEIZED ALL DOWNTOWN BRIDGES AND BLOCKADED PASSAGE INTO CENTRAL BANK AND BANK OF LONDON. EXCEPT FOR BROKEN WINDOW IN LATTER, THERE HAS BEEN NO VIOLENCE, BUT PARTIAL CLOSURE OF BRIDGES BRINGS ALL TOWN TRAFFIC TO STANDSTILL AND HAS CONSIDERABLE NUISANCE VALUE.

5. GOH PROFESSES TO BE TAKING MATTER SERIOUSLY. ON JULY 14 MINISTER ALCERRO INFORMED US THAT PRESENT WEEK WOULD BE "DELICATE", BRINGING FIRST SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO PUBLIC ORDER UNDER PRESENT REGIME. HE SAID GOH WOULD NOT YIELD ON ISSUE, BUT WAS BOUND TO BE EMBARRASSED, SINCE IT WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO USE FORCE AGAINST STUDENTS. MINFINANCE ACOSTA INFORMED US THAT CABINET ON JULY 18 AGAIN CONSIDERED MATTER, AND AGAIN DECIDED TO STAND FAST. CES COMMANDER COL. POLICARPO PAZ YESTERDAY CANCELLED PLANNED OBSERVATION TRIP TO US SET FOR JULY 29, ALLEGING THAT GENERAL LOPEZ REQUIRED HIM TO REMAIN TO LOOK AFTER STUDENTS. PAZ TOLD USAID PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISOR THAT ON JULY 17 HE HAD ISSUED TEAR GAS TO POLICE, AND WOULD COMMIT THEM IN CASE OF VIOLENCE.

6. NORMAL SCHOOL PROJECT IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING BY WORLD BANK WITH UNESCO PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. AID PER SE IS NOT INVOLVED, ALTHOUGH COLPROSUMAH HAS ISSUED PRONOUNCEMENT ASSOCIATING STRIKE WITH REDUCING AID INFLUENCE OVER HONDURAN EDUCATION. STUDENTS HAVE SO FAR NOT INVOKED ANY USG TARGETS, AND HAVE NOT ATTACKED USIS, PAST WHICH THEY MAKE DAILY MARCHES.

7. COMMENT: STRIKE IS STILL NOT GENERATING MUCH PUBLIC UNEASE, AND WE CONSIDER THAT GOH MAY BE OVERESTIMATING
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IT. GOH SENSITIVITY MAY BE DUE TO FACT THAT GENERAL LOPEZ IN PAST DISCREDITED CRUZ GOVERNMENT FOR STUDENT RIOTS (WHICH LOPEZ HIMSELF, AS CHIEF OF ARMED FORCES PERMITTED TO DEVELOP BY FAILING TO PROVIDE POLICE RESTRAINT). LOPEZ MAY THUS FEAR HE WILL BE JUDGED BY HIS OWN YARDSTICK IF VIOLENCE OCCURS.
SANCHEZ

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TEGUCI02675
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS SANCHEZ
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: TEGUCIGALPA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730722/aaaaaptk.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26-Sep-2001 by martinml>; APPROVED <11 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TEGUCIGALPA STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE AGAINST GOH
TAGS: PINS, HO
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005